

School Governor Handbook

Irish Medium Schools

Contents

	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. Core Values of Irish Medium Immersion Education	4
2.1 Who We Are	
2.2 What We Do	
2.3 Why We Do It	
3. Irish Medium Schools	5
3.1 Types of School	
3.2 Early Stage School Development Funding	
4. The School Trustees	6
5. Role of the Board of Governors	7
5.1 Strategic Governance	
5.2 Operational Governance	
5.3 Role of the Board in Establishing the School Development Plan	
5.4 The Challenge Role	
6. Statement of Reserved Matters for the Board of Governors	11
7. Sub-Committees of the Board of Governors	13
7.1 Finance Committee	
7.2 Human Resources Committee	
7.3 Standards and Performance Committee	
7.4 Other Sub-Committees	
8. Meetings of the Board of Governors	17
8.1 Standing Items Considered at each Meeting	
8.2 Rolling Strategic Items	
8.3 Indicative Calendar for Board of Governors	
9. Responsibilities and Duties of the Chairperson	21
10. Role of the School Governor	23
10.1 Commitment Required	
10.2 Promoting Good Governance	
11. Code of Conduct	24
11.1 Objectivity	
11.2 Commitment	
11.3 Collective Responsibility	
11.4 Integrity	
11.5 Honesty	

Contents (contd.)	Page
12. School Governor Induction	26
12.1 Induction Pack Contents	
12.2 Induction Meetings	
13. Appraisal of Governors and Evaluation of Board Effectiveness	27
13.1 Performance Appraisal Governors	
13.2 Board Effectiveness Evaluation	
14. Conflict of Interest Policy	28
15. Gifts and Hospitality Policy	30
15.1 Statement	
15.2 Receipt of Gifts and Hospitality	
15.3 Gifts and Hospitality Register	
16. Compliance Assurance	32

Appendices

I	Seven Principles of Public Life	33
II	Declaration of Consent to be a Member of the Board of Governors	34
III	Register of Interests Form	35
IV	Governor Contact Details Form	36
V	Governor Performance Appraisal Questionnaire	37
VI	Board of Governors Performance Evaluation Questionnaire	40
VII	Register of Gifts and Hospitality Form	48
VIII	Compliance Schedule	49
	School Management Policies – Statutory	
	School Management Policies – Non Statutory	
	HR/Employment Policies – Statutory and Non Statutory	
IX	Useful Reference Materials	56

1. Introduction

Governance is the system by which organisations are directed and controlled. The responsibilities of school governors include establishing a vision for the school, setting out strategic aims, establishing and maintaining the school ethos, setting the school's plans and policies, monitoring and evaluating school performance, supporting and challenging management in raising achievement levels and reporting to stakeholders on their stewardship. The Board of Governors' actions are subject to laws and the regulations set out in the School Scheme of Management agreed with the Education Authority.

The fundamental principles of good governance are accountability, transparency, probity and focus on the sustainable success of the organisation over the longer term.

To achieve good governance Boards must think deeply, thoroughly and on a continuing basis, about their overall tasks and the implications of these for the roles of their individual members. Absolutely key in this endeavour are the leadership of the Chair of the Board, the support given to and by the Principal, and the frankness and openness of mind with which issues are discussed and tackled by all Governors.

The challenge should not be underrated. To carry out the role successfully is extremely demanding. Constraints on time and knowledge combine with the need to maintain mutual respect and openness, dealing with each other from across different backgrounds, skills and experience. To achieve good governance requires continuing and high quality effort.

Detailed guidance is available through the Department of Education's Every School a Good School – Guide for Governors and the Education and Training Inspectorate has provided a self-evaluation pro forma Together Towards Improvement. Codes of good practice have also been established in other sectors; these include the UK Corporate Governance Code published by the Financial Reporting Council and the Code of Good Governance for the Voluntary and Community Sector in Northern Ireland.

This bespoke Handbook for Governors in the Irish Medium Sector has been sponsored by the Department of Education and produced in consultation with representatives from the Boards of Governors of the Irish medium schools in the Greater Belfast area.

2. Core Values of Irish Medium Immersion Education

At the outset of the process the School Governor Representatives felt that the starting point for a bespoke governance handbook was to articulate clearly the core values of Irish Medium Immersion Education. Over the course of a number of workshops the following value statements were agreed.

It is the view of the School Governor Representatives that these value statements underpin the ethos of Irish medium education and differentiate it from other sectors and that it is important for all Governors to understand and support these core values as they undertake their responsibilities.

It was taken as read that Governors in all sectors must be focused on the best outcomes for children including: achievements and standards; effective leadership and management; pastoral care and high quality child/learner-centred provision.

2.1 Who we are:

We are Irish speakers, activists with deep roots in local communities, some of which are among the most disadvantaged in the North of Ireland.

Our schools have been established through community belief, hard work and commitment to Irish cultural identity.

Our schools are open and welcoming to all. They are child centred, all ability, non-denominational, co-educational and exhibit a special relationship between teacher, pupil and community, achieving educational excellence.

2.2 What we do:

We provide the education curriculum to a high standard through the medium of Irish; our indigenous language.

We recognise a full immersion approach as the optimum pedagogy to achieve the educational benefits of bilingualism.

We are a catalyst for social change through our unique relationship with the local community and build confidence through our promotion of Irish cultural identity.

2.3 Why we do it:

To achieve educational excellence. Bilingualism has a positive effect on intellectual growth and enriches and enhances a child's mental development particularly their cognitive skills.

We are activists building a language community and promoting Irish cultural identity to build community confidence and capacity and raise levels of achievement.

3. Irish Medium Schools

3.1 Types of School

The education system in the North of Ireland consists of several different types of grant aided schools: Controlled, Voluntary (which includes Catholic and Other Maintained and Voluntary Grammar schools) and Grant Maintained Integrated. Each school type has an arrangement for control and management.

Irish medium education is provided in one of three types:

- Controlled schools are under the management of the schools' Board of Governors and the Employing Authority is the Education Authority.
- Maintained are under the management of the Board of Governors and the Employing Authority is the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools. In general these are Irish medium units within an English medium school.
- Other Maintained schools are under the management of a Board of Governors who are also the employing authority for teachers (the employing authorities for non-teaching staff is the Education Authority). All but one Irish medium school falls into this category.

3.2 Early Stage School Development Funding

Irish medium schools have deep roots in local communities. They have been established, through community belief, hard work and commitment to Irish cultural identity. In each case this pioneering work to establish the school has been led by Irish language activists seeking to build a language community and broader community confidence, capacity and achievement.

Initially supported through fundraising and grant aid from Iontaobhas na Gaelscolaíochta, as the school grows and develops, the school Trustees will apply for formal recognition and recurrent funding from the Department of Education through submission of a Development Proposal. Subsequently, once the required stable enrolment thresholds have been reached, the Trustees will apply for capital funding. At this point the capital invested originally by Iontaobhas na Gaelscolaíochta is repaid to support the development of other new schools.

The Department will take ownership of the site in return for its capital investment (vesting), which is then given back in trust to the original Trustees. The Department will require a minimum of 3 Trustees as members of the Trust.

4. The School Trustees

School Trustees are the founders or successors to the founders of the school and as such they are the custodians of the school's vision and ethos.

The school property, typically the school site, is held by them by way of a Trust. Trusts have a Trust Deed document and may have subsequent documents that set out the powers and conditions of the Trust. This will limit the scope of the Trust and therefore limit the school to the objects of the Trust. Typically the objects of the Trust will include the advancement of education through the medium of the Irish language. In this way, the Irish medium ethos of the school is assured.

The arrangements for the governance of the Trust are set out in the Trust Deed and will include such things as appointing successor Trustees and whether annual meetings are required. This is an important document, a copy of which should be held by the Board of Governors.

The Trustees subscribe to the core values of Irish medium education outlined in this handbook and appoint Governors to the school Board. In a 100% capital grant school the Trustees nominate four ninths of the Governors. In an 85% capital grant school the Trustees nominate five ninths of the Governors.

5. Role of the Board of Governors

(Chapter 3 Guide for Governors www.deni.gov.uk)

The role of the Board of Governors is to provide strategic leadership and oversee the operation of the school with a view to providing the best possible education and educational opportunities for all of the pupils. This involves:

- setting the strategic direction for the school; and
- taking decisions in relation to the statutory functions of the Board of Governors.

In Irish medium schools this is set in the context of the core values of Irish medium education outlined earlier in this handbook, which include:

- commitment to Irish cultural identity
- delivering the curriculum through the medium of Irish, our indigenous language
- recognising a full immersion approach as the optimum pedagogy
- reaching out to the local community as a catalyst for social change

5.1 Strategic Governance

This involves:

- setting the school's vision and aims;
- establishing and maintaining the school's ethos;
- setting the school's development plan and policies;
- monitoring and evaluating school performance; and
- promoting self-evaluation to sustain school improvement

The Board of Governors should aim to **raise expectations of what can be achieved** by all pupils and strengthen the involvement of parents and the community.

5.2 Operational Governance

The Board of Governors has many varied statutory functions. In practical terms this will normally involve:

School Performance Measures

- establishing priorities and targets for promoting improvement in standards of performance;
- setting performance objectives for the principal under Performance Review and Staff Development (PRSD);and
- managing the school's finances;

Curriculum Planning

- agreeing a Curriculum Policy;
- facilitating the implementation of the Northern Ireland Curriculum;
- ensuring proper provision for pupils with special educational needs;

Employment Issues

- determining the school's staff complement;
- selecting and appointing staff with regard to costs and curriculum needs;
- managing employment issues including a staff salary policy and staff conduct, discipline and grievance procedures (in compliance with the laws that prohibit discrimination and harassment and promote equality of opportunity in employment);

Pupil Pastoral Care and Protection Issues

- safeguarding and promoting the welfare and protection of pupils;
- setting general principles on good behaviour and pupil conduct;
- participating in pupil disciplinary procedures;

Publication of Information regarding the School and its Pupils

- providing information for parents about the school and their children;
- agreeing and applying criteria for pupil admissions;

Managing the School Premises and Relations with the Community

- controlling the use of premises, inspecting the premises and equipment annually and ensuring the school estate is properly maintained (this will involve liaison with the Project Manager when the services are provided by a contractor);
- promoting good relations between the school and the community.

5.3 Role of the Board in establishing the School Development Plan

In setting out the school development plan and ensuring its implementation, the Board of Governors has the following functions:

- the agreement and communication of broad strategic principles
- the setting of the strategic plan's framework and priorities
- signing off on the developed strategy which has been created by management
- the approval of developed work programmes in line with the agreed strategy including the required financial budget
- ongoing identification of strategic gaps in the school's actions
- ongoing oversight and review of the effectiveness of the strategy and value for money in respect of work programmes
- review of annual out-turn and recommendations on changes required as a result of this review
- ongoing awareness of the needs and timings of external stakeholders within the planning and management cycles.

5.4 The Challenge Role

The Board of Governors should act as a 'critical friend', asking challenging questions. Through its 'challenge role' the Board of Governors ensures that it has the information necessary to make the right decisions and that it does not succumb to merely nodding through decisions of the Principal. A school sometimes needs things to be said for its own good by a wise and trusted friend who cares about it and whose motives and judgements can be relied upon.

The following diagram illustrates the varying attitudes that Boards of Governors may adopt in their relationship with the Principal in the joint endeavour of leading the school:



The High Support/High Challenge, Partner/Critical Friend Role is the one which Boards of Governors should aim to adopt. Challenge and Support leads to a Better School.

For the Partner/Critical Friend Role to be effective and achieved successfully requires:

- continuing and high quality effort
- mutual respect and openness between individual Governors
- mutual respect and openness between Governors and the Principal
- commitment to change and continuous improvement.

Overall the role of the Board of Governors is to govern and not to manage, which is the responsibility of the Principal and his/her staff. In carrying out its responsibilities, the Board of Governors will uphold the values of accountability to its stakeholders, probity and transparency.

The Board meets at least three times each year. A quorum at a meeting is 50% of the voting members.

Timely and Suitable Provision of Papers for Meetings

Except in cases of emergency, the Secretary will ensure that papers are circulated to Governors at least five days in advance of meetings in order that the Governors have sufficient time to read and digest them.

Provision of Financial Information

Each Board meeting will receive as a minimum, a statement comparing actual expenditure and income against budget and explaining any variances.

6. Statement of Reserved Matters for the Board of Governors

This Statement of Reserved Matters records the powers which are exclusive to the Board of Governors and provides a clear framework for the distinction between Board governance and the executive management control placed on the Principal and his/her management team.

- 1) Election/appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair (and other officers as decided) of the Board and Chair of a committee in accordance with Articles 40 and 41 of the Scheme of Management.
- 2) The co-option of up to three persons to be members of the Board of Governors in accordance with Article 122 of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989.
- 3) The appointment of a parent representative where a vacancy for a parent member is required to be filled by election; and no parents stood for election as the parent member, in accordance with Article 121 of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989.
- 4) Terms of Reference and Membership of Committees in accordance with Articles 22 and 23 of the Scheme of Management. Membership may include persons who are not members of the Board of Governors.
- 5) The selection, appointment, promotion, discipline, suspension and dismissal of all teachers in the school not being peripatetic or supply teachers in accordance with Article 11 of the Scheme of Management.
- 6) Approval of Vision and Aims and Ethos of the school.
- 7) Approval of the school Development Plan and Annual Plan deriving from same.
- 8) Approval of Action Plans in response to ETI inspection reports.
- 9) Approval of Development Proposals prior to submission to the Education Authority/Department.
- 10) Approval of the school's admissions policy in accordance with Article 28 of the Education NI Order 2006.
- 11) Approval of a written statement of curriculum policy which ensures compliance with:
 - Articles 4 and 11 of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989
 - Article 13 of the Scheme of Management
- 12) A written statement of general principles to which the Principal is to have regard in determining any measures:
 - (a) To promote, among pupils, self-discipline and proper regard for authority;

- (b) To encourage good behaviour and respect for others on the part of pupils and, in particular, preventing all forms of bullying among pupils;
 - (c) To secure that the standard of behaviour of pupils is acceptable; and
 - (d) otherwise regulating the conduct of pupils.
- 13) Approval of policy in relation to charging for “optional extras” for pupils in accordance with Article 131 of the 1989 Education Reform (NI) Order and remissions policy for such charges.
- 14) Approval of all other policies and changes to such policies.
- 15) Approval of capital and revenue budgets.
- 16) Approval of expenditure above £?k. [Threshold to be set by Board of Governors]
Governors should ensure that expenditure complies with procurement guidance issued to schools by the Education Authority.
- 17) Approval of expenditure outside budget.
- 18) Approval of any major consultancy appointments, being those above £?k, to carry out work within the school. [Threshold to be set by Board of Governors]
- 19) Approval of internal control procedures including financial thresholds.
- 20) Approval of all legal proceedings prior to issuing.
- 21) Approval of the establishment or cessation of any partnership working or collaboration between the school and a third party.
- 22) Preparation of an Annual Report in accordance with Article 18 of the Scheme of Management

Where situations arise that require urgent or immediate action as per Article 21 of the Scheme of Management, the Chair or if he/she cannot be contacted, the Vice Chair, having consulted with such other Board members who are available; has the power to discharge any of the above matters in the interests of the school and shall report such action to the next meeting of the Board of Governors.

7. Sub Committees of the Board of Governors

In order to fulfil its responsibilities effectively, the Board of Governors should consider establishing sub committees to focus on key areas. This allows for detailed review, analysis and oversight to take place; for which sufficient time is unlikely to be available at a Board of Governors meeting. This is particularly important where the BoG only meets once per term.

The Board of Governors may establish such committees as it considers necessary and may refer any matters within its purview to such a committee for consideration and report. In all situations, the Board of Governors should ensure that written statements are maintained of the delegated activities of its committees. Model templates are outlined below for the following sub committees:

- Finance,
- Human Resources,
- Standards and Performance.

7.1 Finance Committee Terms of Reference

(Chapter 8 Guide for Governors www.deni.gov.uk)

The role of the Board of Governors is to manage the school funds economically, efficiently and effectively for the purposes of the school in accordance with a Financial Memorandum published by the Education Authority. The Board of Governors must:

- have a three year financial plan approved by the Education Authority for the school;
- contain expenditure within the annual budget approved for the school; and
- ensure that expenditure is monitored and controlled during the financial year.

The membership of the committee shall be determined by the Board of Governors. All members of the Finance Committee will be members of the Board of Governors, the majority of whom will be voting members. The Finance Committee should consist of a minimum of three voting members of the Board of Governors. At least one member must have significant, recent and relevant financial experience.

The delegated duties of a Finance Committee may include:

- considering a draft financial plan prepared by the principal for the incoming year in the context of the school's formula funding allocation and its Development Plan;
- exploring different expenditure options;
- forecasting future pupil enrolments and income levels;
- monitoring budgeted income and expenditure on a monthly basis;
- monitoring and adjusting as necessary in year actual against approved expenditure;
- finalising end of year accounts and reviewing outcome;
- assessing the effectiveness of financial decisions;
- agreeing a written statement of the school's financial systems and procedures;

- administering voluntary and private funds including the school's Charging and Remissions Policy;
- making recommendations to the Board of Governors on financial matters.

The Finance Committee should provide a written report to each meeting of the Board of Governors which as a minimum will include:

- Draft budget for approval (in advance of the beginning of the year)
- Statement of Income and Expenditure against budget with explanation of variances (at each meeting)
- Report on voluntary and private funds
- End of Year Accounts (at end of year)
- Other matters within its delegated responsibilities

The Finance Committee will meet as often as required but at least three times each year.

7.2 Human Resources Committee Terms of Reference

(Chapter 9 Guide for Governors

www.deni.gov.uk)

The membership of the committee shall be determined by the Board of Governors and may include persons who are not members of the Board of Governors. Membership shall include not less than three voting members of the Board of Governors.

Members participating in staff recruitment panels must undertake specific recruitment training as provided by the Department or Education Authority. The majority of members on a recruitment panel in an Irish medium school should be competent speakers of Irish.

The delegated duties of a Human Resources Committee may include:

- To consider, advise and make appropriate recommendations to the Board of Governors on all aspects of HR Strategy, including policy and procedures;
- To monitor the school's annual staff profile and trends, including employee perception data;
- To monitor progress against HR Plans in relation to recruitment, leadership and professional development, performance management and employment policies and procedures;
- To select and appoint staff in line with the HR plan and having regard to costs and curriculum needs;
- To manage employment issues including staff conduct, discipline and grievance procedures;
- To consider personnel aspects of strategic scenarios and recommend appropriate responses to the Board.
- To review and update the School Remuneration Policy for teachers and make recommendations to the Board.

Where the committee has delegated responsibility for the appointment, promotion or dismissal of teachers, the majority of members will be voting members and the minimum number of voting members will be three. The BoG may prefer to constitute a separate and time limited sub-committee for these purposes.

The Human Resources Committee should provide a written report to each meeting of the Board of Governors.

The Human Resources Committee will meet as often as required but at least three times each year.

7.3 Standards and Performance Committee Terms of Reference

(Chapter 6 Guide for Governors

www.deni.gov.uk)

The membership of the committee shall be determined by the Board of Governors and may include persons who are not members of the Board of Governors. Membership shall include not less than three voting members of the Board of Governors.

Schools are required by legislation to set their own targets for improvement, including targets for literacy and numeracy, and include these in the School Development Plan. It is up to individual schools to set their own realistic but challenging targets, based on their current performance trends and plans for improvement. When setting targets, schools will wish to take into account a range of factors, including:

- trends in performance by the school over previous years;
- the prior attainment of each year group;
- the context within which the school is operating and how it compares to schools in similar circumstances; and
- the priorities set in the School Development Plan.

The delegated duties of the Standards and Performance Committee may include:

- Monitoring standards achieved and working with the Principal and senior staff to draft, for approval by the Board, performance targets for progress and improvement in the quality of pupil provision and outcomes.
- Reviewing school plans to meet pupil needs and monitor performance against those plans.
- Ensuring a robust and open culture of self-evaluation to inform target setting and drive school improvement and educational excellence.

The Standards and Performance Committee should provide a written report to each meeting of the Board of Governors.

The Committee will meet as often as required but at least three times each year.

7.4 Other Sub Committees

In the context of an emerging sector and in support of the core values of Irish medium education, Boards of Governors may also wish to consider establishing sub committees under the broad theme of sustaining Irish school communities which would include:

- Growing School Enrolment
- Community Services and Outreach
- Irish Language Support for Parents and Families

8. Meetings of the Board of Governors

Central to the successful fulfilment of the Board of Governors' responsibilities is the effective organisation of and structure given to Board meetings. This responsibility rests with the Chair of the Board supported by the School Principal.

Time should be taken at the start of each year for the Board to agree the key strategic issues which it will focus on and devote time to through the year and then to schedule these issues for review and discussion at specific meetings.

These strategic issues will sit alongside the standing operational issues considered at each meeting.

Outlined below are suggested "standing" and "strategic" items to be included on the agenda of Board of Governors' meetings.

Consideration should also be given to the language of communication (Irish or English) at Board of Governors' meetings, as this may have important implications in relation to ensuring the Board has access to an appropriate range of skills within its membership.

8.1 Standing Items considered at each meeting

1. Apologies
2. Conflicts of Interest
(Declaration of any conflicts arising from the business of the meeting.)
3. Minutes of Previous meeting
4. Matters arising from the minutes not appearing on the agenda
5. Matters raised in writing by Members (10 days in advance of the meeting)
6. Chair's Business
7. Principal's Report
(The Board should advise the Principal on what it requires to be covered in his/her report. This may include General Update on school activity, SENs, Pastoral Care including attendance and discipline, Curriculum issues, Staffing issues, Health and Safety.)
8. Child Protection
9. Finance Report
10. Report on Performance against Targets set within the Annual plan.

11. Reports from Board Sub-Committees

(If the Board is only meeting once each term and doing its substantive business through sub-committees between meetings, then reports should be received from all sub-committees at each meeting. If the Board is meeting more regularly, then a rolling programme of sub-committee reports may suffice.)

8.2 Rolling Strategic Items

- Development Plan
- Annual Plan arising from the Development Plan
- Revenue Budget
- Capital Budget
- Admissions Criteria
- Curriculum Provision
- Reports from Department/Subject/Key stage Heads (One each meeting)
- Special Educational Needs provision
- Strengthening Stakeholder Relations. (Perhaps take one group at each meeting.)
- Enrolment
- Regular Update on Safeguarding
- Annual Compliance/Policy Review
- Annual Premises maintenance and development review
- Annual Board Evaluation

Outlined below is an indicative calendar for Boards of Governors.

8.3 Indicative Calendar for Boards of Governors

Term One	Term Two	Term Three
First Half	First Half	First Half
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree structure/schedule of governor meetings for the year, including terms of reference and membership of sub-committees. • Identify training needs and agree attendance at governor training and development sessions. • Review admissions criteria in light of September intake. • Review performance in public examinations. • Carry out a curriculum audit to ensure school is fulfilling statutory requirements and to identify possible areas for curricular redundancy and/or appointment of new staff. • If necessary, start redundancy and/or appointment procedures. • Monitor budget and end of year projections – each meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to implement redundancy procedures if necessary. • Continue to implement appointment procedures if necessary. • Conduct premises inspection and draw up report. • Consider new enrolment numbers achieved in year and target numbers for September. Agree communications plan and other actions required to meet target. • Receive and discuss curriculum report from Head of Department/Subject/Key Stage – rolling programme. • Review school policies identified for review and updating. • Review progress in implementing actions agreed to address areas of Board of Governors underperformance. • Monitor budget and end of year projections – each meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise redundancy procedures if necessary. • Finalise appointment procedures if necessary. • Review school policies identified for review and updating. • Receive and discuss curriculum report from Head of Department/Subject/Key Stage – rolling programme. • Review progress on communications plan and other actions agreed to achieve enrolment target. • Receive report on the views of one of the school's stakeholders (staff, learners, parents and members of the community) to assist in planning and evaluating the school's success – rolling programme. • Monitor budget and end of year projections – each meeting.

Term One	Term Two	Term Three
Second Half	Second Half	Second Half
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare Governors Annual Report and make parents aware of it. • Arrange and hold Annual Parents' Meeting if required. • Monitor progress of implementation of Annual Plan derived from Development Plan. • Monitor the performance targets for Principal/Vice Principal. • Review Compliance Schedule and identify those policies due for review/update. • Child Protection/Safeguarding update from Designated Teacher. • Special Educational Needs update from SENCO. • Receive and discuss curriculum report from Head of Department/Subject/Key Stage – rolling programme. • Receive report on the views of one of the school's stakeholders (staff, learners, parents and members of the community) to assist in planning and evaluating the school's success – rolling programme. • Monitor budget and end of year projections – each meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise expenditure for the financial year. • Set budget for new financial year and draw up 3 year financial plan using best estimate projections based on budget and expenditure reports. • Monitor progress of implementation of Annual Plan derived from Development Plan. • Monitor the performance targets for Principal/Vice Principal. • Child Protection/Safeguarding update from Designated Teacher. • Special Educational Needs update from SENCO. • Receive report on the views of one of the school's stakeholders (staff, learners, parents and members of the community) to assist in planning and evaluating the school's success – rolling programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review performance targets for Principal/Vice Principal and set targets for new school year. • Carry out salary review for all staff. • Monitor progress of implementation of Annual Plan derived from Development Plan and discuss and agree new Annual Plan. Annual Plan to include educational achievement targets based on robust self-evaluation procedures and benchmarking against similar schools. • Child Protection/Safeguarding update from Designated Teacher. • Special Educational Needs update from SENCO. • Discuss results of annual Board of Governors evaluation and agree action plan to address areas of underperformance. • Monitor budget and revise 3 year plan if necessary in light of final accrual figures.

9. Responsibilities and Duties of the Chairperson

(Chapter 4 Guide for Governors www.deni.gov.uk)

The chairperson is pivotal in creating the conditions for the overall Board of Governors and individual Governor effectiveness. Specifically the Chair's responsibilities are:

- To chair and lead the Board and set its agenda.
- To ensure that Governors receive accurate, timely and clear information, in particular about the school's performance against operational plan and budget; to enable the Board to take sound decisions, monitor effectively and provide advice to promote the success of the school.
- To ensure effective communication with stakeholders and ensure the governors develop an understanding of their views.
- To manage the Board to ensure sufficient time is allowed for discussion of complex or contentious issues, where appropriate arranging for informal meetings to enable thorough preparation for the board discussion.
- To ensure that the performance of individual Governors and of the Board as a whole and its committees is evaluated at least once a year.
- To encourage active engagement by all Governors.
- To promote effective relationships between the Governors and the teachers.
- To establish a close relationship of trust with the Principal, providing support and advice and participating in his/her annual appraisal.
- To represent the school at events as required.

In addition:

- He/she ensures compliance with policy in any whistle-blowing cases which may arise within the school.
- Leads in the resolution of issues regarding real or perceived conflicts of interest by Governors.

Role of the Chair in relation to the Annual Report

The Chair also has a role in relation to the Annual Report where he/she must ensure the following information is provided:

- the name of each member of the Board of Governors, the date on which their term of office ends and indicate into which of the following categories he/she falls, namely:-
 - (i) members elected by parents;
 - (ii) members elected by assistant teachers;
 - (iii) members nominated by the Education Authority;
 - (iv) members nominated by the Head of the Department;
 - (v) members co-opted under Article 122 or Article 139 of the 1989 Order;
 - (vi) the principal;
- name the Chair of the Board of Governors and its Secretary;
- give such information as is available to the Board of Governors about arrangements for the next election of parents to the Board of Governors;
- a financial statement
- steps taken by the Board of Governors to develop or strengthen the school's links with the community;
- such information as is required by the Department to be made available in accordance with regulations under Article 31(2)(a) of the 1989 Order; in relation to:
 - (i) the curriculum of the school;
 - (ii) the educational provision made by the school for pupils at the school and any syllabuses to be followed by those pupils; and
 - (iii) the educational achievements of pupils at the school (including the results of any assessments of those pupils for the purpose of ascertaining those achievements); and
 - (iv) any other matter;
- arrangements made and facilities provided for special educational needs (SEN) and disabled pupils including any special admission arrangements which the governors have made and the steps taken to ensure that pupils with special educational needs or disabilities are treated no less favourably than other pupils under Article 8 of the 1996 Order and Article 18 of the SEND Order 2005;
- steps taken to secure the implementation of their special educational needs (SEN) policies in accordance with Article 9 of the 1996 Order;
- information as to the facilities provided to assist access to the school by disabled pupils and the accessibility plan for the school;
- arrangements made for the security of the pupils and staff of the school and the school premises; and any changes to those arrangements since the last report was prepared.

10. Role of the School Governor

(Chapter 3 Guide for Governors www.deni.gov.uk)

10.1 Commitment Required

Appointment as a school governor is a voluntary, unpaid position but it is not one which should be taken lightly. At its heart is the responsibility to nurture the educational, social, physical, emotional, personal, linguistic, developmental, intellectual and spiritual needs of the pupils attending the school. It requires a commitment beyond attending Board meetings.

Governors bring their experience, life skills and common sense to the role but must also ensure they are knowledgeable of educational matters; understand the workings, strengths and weaknesses of the school and support the Principal and teachers in achieving educational excellence.

To do this Governors are expected to:

- prepare for, attend and participate in Board and Committee meetings;
- undertake training;
- attend school functions;
- support the Principal to enable him/her to control the day to day internal management of the school; and
- encourage good communications within the school.

Governors in Irish medium schools must also be committed to the promotion of the core values of Irish medium immersion education as outlined at the start of this handbook.

10.2 Promoting Good Governance

Individual Governors have a responsibility to ensure that the Board of Governors exercises its authority in an effective and transparent manner. In order to meet this responsibility, each Governor needs to ensure that they understand the policies and procedures governing the school's activities.

In carrying out their role, Governors should:

- give proper weight to the advice and guidance from the Principal;
- support majority decisions of the Board of Governors;
- ensure that the position of Governor is not used for personal gain;
- declare all potential conflicts of interest;
- protect the confidential nature of school business; and
- work within the school's Scheme of Management.

A Governor will not incur personal liability in respect of any action taken in good faith in the exercise of the school Board's delegated duties and responsibilities. Good faith, broadly speaking, may be regarded as an act which is undertaken honestly, with no ulterior motive and in the light of the information available at the time.

11. Code of Conduct

11.1 Objectivity

Take decisions objectively in the interests of the school and Irish medium education. Governors should think and act independently, not be afraid to challenge proposals, ensuring that proper critical review is given to the Board's collective decisions and actions.

11.2 Commitment

Attend all Board meetings and contribute as appropriate outside Board meetings.

Act collaboratively with other Governors in a spirit of mutual respect and team work.

Develop effective relationships with the Principal and teachers, providing support and advice when required.

Ensure you are well informed and up to date with developments in education generally and Irish medium education in particular.

Undertake training which will further your understanding of your role as a Governor and enhance the effectiveness of your contribution to the work of the Board and the performance of the school.

11.3 Collective Responsibility

Governors must abide by the collective decisions made by the Board of Governors.

Governors should only speak or act on behalf of the governing body when they have been specifically asked to do so by the Board.

All visits to school should be undertaken within a framework which has been established by the Board of Governors.

In responding to criticism or complaints relating to the school, Governors should refer to the School's 'Complaints Procedure' for the correct procedure to be followed and advise the complainant accordingly.

11.4 Integrity

Uphold at all times the three fundamental values of corporate governance:

- Accountability – for your decisions and actions to the public, funders and service users.
- Probity – act with honesty.
- Transparency - be as open as possible about the decisions and actions you take.

Adhere by the Seven Principles of Public Life (attached at Appendix I)

Act at all times within the law and within the provisions of the school's Scheme of Management and in accordance with the Statement of Reserved Matters for the Board.

Treat as confidential all information acquired as a Governor of the school.

Do not place yourself under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence you in the performance of your role.

Avoid any impropriety or appearance of improper behaviour.

Avoid accepting gifts and hospitality that might reasonably be thought to influence your judgement.

11.5 Honesty

Do not obtain, attempt to obtain or accept any bribe, secret commission or illegal inducement of any sort.

Do not take improper advantage of your position as a Governor to gain, directly or indirectly, a personal advantage or an advantage for any associated person which might cause detriment to the school.

Make relevant declarations of interest where there is an actual or potential conflict between your own personal interests, or the interests of any associated organisation or person, and your duties to the school.

12. School Governor Induction

On appointment, each new governor will be given an induction pack of key documents which will outline the core values of Irish medium immersion education and provide an overview of the school, its ethos, strategic direction, challenges and achievements.

As part of his/her induction the new governor will be expected to meet a range of stakeholders to further deepen his/her understanding and appreciation of the school and in this way be able to contribute quickly and effectively as a school governor.

12.1 Induction Pack Contents

The induction pack should include:

- Declaration of acceptance of membership of the Board of Governors, of understanding of the core values of Irish medium education and the ethos of the school and of agreement to uphold the responsibilities outlined in the Scheme of Management. (For signature) Template attached at Appendix II.
- Copy of the Vision, Aims and Ethos of the school
- Copy of the Governance Handbook
- Copy of the Scheme of Management
- Register of Interests Form. (For completion) Template attached at Appendix III.
- Contact details form. (For completion) Template attached at Appendix IV.
- Copy of School Annual Report
- Copy of School Development Plan
- Staff Structure Chart
- List of other Governors with contact details and short pen pictures
- Copies of Minutes of last three Board meetings
- Dates of Future Meetings

12.2 Induction Meetings

New Governors should arrange to meet:

- The Chair of the Board of Governors
- The School Principal
- The school senior management team individually
- The parent representative on the Board

Arrangements should also be made for a tour of the school.

13. Appraisal of Governors and Evaluation of Board of Governor Effectiveness

(Together Towards Improvement – A Process for Self-Evaluation

www.etini.gov.uk)

Best practice in corporate governance recommends that a Board undertakes a formal annual evaluation of its performance and the performance of individual directors. Such practice can also enhance the performance of School Boards of Governors and sits well with the policy of self-evaluation.

13.1 Performance Appraisal of Governors

Often one of the most sensitive and yet essential aspects of Board evaluation is appraising the performance of individual Governors. It is a characteristic of professional maturity and commitment to performance excellence when an appraisal process is established.

Boards of Governors should consider the adoption and implementation of performance appraisal through the completion of a self-assessment questionnaire by each Governor. The process is led by the Chair who will review all the completed questionnaires to ensure consistency and will take appropriate action in relation to any specific issues arising.

A template Self-assessment Questionnaire is provided at Appendix V.

13.2 Board Effectiveness Evaluation

Board of Governors' effectiveness should be evaluated annually through the completion by each Governor of a questionnaire which poses searching questions covering the key responsibilities of the Board - Strategic Leadership, Performance Monitoring, Stakeholder Relationships, Risk Management, Resource Planning and Board Practices.

The results should then be collated and analysed for discussion by the full Board. The discussion should focus on:

- The evidence of good performance for those areas where there is agreement that performance is of the required standard.
- Those areas where there is broad agreement that improvement in Board performance is required.
- Those areas where a significant minority of Governors believe improvement is required.

The discussion should conclude with the agreement of an Action Plan to address the areas of under-performance. Progress against the Action Plan should be reviewed after six months.

A template Board Effectiveness Evaluation Questionnaire is provided at Appendix VI.

14. Conflict of Interest Policy

School Governors have a general duty to avoid any actual or potential conflict between their own personal interests, or the interests of any associated organisation or person and their duties to the school. Governors have a duty:

- to declare interest in a proposed transaction or arrangement;
- to declare interest in an existing transaction or arrangement;
- not to accept benefits from third parties seeking to influence decisions.

Should a Governor, someone from his/her immediate family or other connected person have a personal interest in some transaction involving the school, the Governor must declare that interest to the Board.

The Governor should exclude him/herself from participating in a decision about or voting on a particular matter unless the Chair feels that the matter involves a conflict of interest which is not material.

In the extreme case of continuing material conflict of interest, good practice requires the Governor to resign from the Board.

Some examples where disclosure of interest would be appropriate are:

- a) Where a family or other relevant relationship exists between the Governor and any person who is employed, or is a candidate for employment at the school and the appointment, remuneration, discipline or other such matter of that person is being discussed.
(Article 43 of the Scheme of Management)*
- b) Where a member of the Board of Governors or a committee thereof has a family or other relevant relationship with a pupil and the admission of, or disciplinary action against, that pupil; or disciplinary action against another pupil arising out of an alleged incident involving the pupil first mentioned in this paragraph; is being discussed.
(Article 44 of Scheme of Management)*
- c) Where a member of the Board of Governors or a committee thereof has knowledge of any instance of canvassing for an appointment, contract or order with which the Board of Governors or a committee is concerned.
(Article 45 of the Scheme of Management)*
- d) Where a member of the Board of Governors or a committee thereof has any pecuniary interest, whether direct or indirect, in the supply of goods or services to the school or in any other matter under consideration by the Board of Governors or a committee.
(Article 46 of the Scheme of Management)*

To assist the school in monitoring potential conflicts of interest, Governors are asked to complete a Register of Interest form as attached at Appendix III, which is held by the Board Secretary. The Register of Interests form should be kept up to date and reviewed formally on an annual basis.

Any breach of the rules relating to declaration of interest is considered by the Chair who takes appropriate action. In the event of the Chair being suspected of breaching the rules then such a case would be dealt with by the other Board members.

15. Gifts and Hospitality Policy

15.1 Statement

The school recognises that contractors, suppliers, parents or other related parties may extend, from time to time, offers of gifts and hospitality to Governors and staff. The school also recognises that its Governors and teachers have a responsibility to exhibit high standards of propriety and transparency in fulfilling their responsibilities to the school. With regards to hospitality and gifts, transparency is an important element for all such activity. Specifically the following should be considered:

- The conduct of a Governor or staff member should not foster the suspicion of a conflict of interests.
- All Hospitality and Gifts must be able to withstand both internal and external scrutiny.
- The level of Hospitality or Gift offered must not be excessive.

15.2 The Receipt of Gifts and Hospitality

All staff and Governors should exercise judgement and propriety regarding offers of gifts and hospitality and should never receive benefits of any kind from a third party which might reasonably be thought to compromise their personal judgement or integrity. **No staff or Governor should do anything which might give rise to the impression that he or she has been or might be influenced by a gift or hospitality or other consideration to show bias for or against any person or organisation while carrying out official duties.**

Gifts:

- a) Seasonal, promotional or trivial gifts (such as diaries, pens etc.) which bear company names and/or logos of the provider of the gift and those gifts having a value of up to £30 may be accepted by individuals **without** the need for these to be reported or approved in advance. Acceptance of any other gift must have been approved in advance by the Chair of the Board of Governors for Governors or the Principal for staff and must be declared in the register of Gifts and Hospitality.
- b) During the procurement or monitoring of a contract, apart from trivial / inexpensive gifts outlined above, no gifts or hospitality of any kind from any source should be accepted by anyone involved with the procurement or monitoring.
- c) Trade, loyalty or discount cards by which staff or Governors might personally benefit from the purchase of goods or services at a reduced price are classified as gifts and should be refused or returned to sender.

- d) During a staff recruitment and selection process, no gifts or hospitality of any kind from any source should be accepted by anyone involved.
- e) All gifts offered (apart from those outlined above which are trivial or inexpensive), even if they are declined / returned should be recorded on the register.

Hospitality:

- f) The acceptance of what would be accepted as conventional hospitality, for example working lunches/dinners, can be accepted provided that it is limited to isolated occasions and is in the interests of the school.
- g) All hospitality offered (apart from those outlined above which are trivial or inexpensive), even if they are declined / returned need to be recorded on the register if greater than a deemed value of £30.

15.3 The Gifts and Hospitality Register

The purpose of the Register is to counter any possible accusations or suspicions of breach of the rules of conduct by staff and Governors.

The Register of Gifts and Hospitality should be included periodically as an agenda item on each staff meeting and Board of Governors meeting.

A template gifts and hospitality register is provided at Appendix VII.

16. Compliance Assurance

The Board of Governors has a range of statutory and other responsibilities to meet which will flow from legislation such as:

- Education Legislation
- Employment Law
- Health & Safety Legislation
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Bribery Act 2010

In most cases, the Board's response to complying with the legislation will be to establish a policy and procedure for the school to follow. It is important for the Board of Governors to be assured that all required policies are in place and that they are up to date and compliant with current legislation or other guidance.

A Compliance Schedule is provided at Appendix VIII. The Compliance Schedule is structured in three sections:

- School Management policies required by statute.
- School Management policies suggested for good practice.
- HR/Employment policies - statutory and good practice.

The Compliance Schedule lists the recommended policies under the above headings. The Board should review the list to be assured that all policies are in place and may wish to add other policies which it has established.

The Compliance Schedule should be completed for each policy in terms of:

- Policy Owner.
- Date policy approved.
- Date policy due for review.
- Evidence of implementation. (some examples provided)

The Board of Governors should review the Compliance Schedule once each year and identify those policies due for review. The policies due for review should then be updated and brought to the Board for approval over the course of the year.

Seven Principles of Public Life

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Declaration of Consent to be a Member of the Board of Governors

I _____ (name)

of _____

(address)

hereby confirm my agreement to be a Member of the Board of Governors of

_____ (insert name of school)

with effect from _____ (date) .

In consenting to be a Member of the Board of Governors, I accept the Scheme of Management for the school and confirm my commitment to fulfil my responsibilities as a school governor in accordance with the Scheme of Management, the core values of Irish medium immersion education and the principles contained in the Governance Handbook.

Signed _____ Date _____

In the presence of:

Signature of Witness:

Name:

Address:

Register of Interests

Name of Governor _____

Name of Company/Organisation/Relation	Details of Interest

Signed

Date

Governor Contact Details

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Telephone _____

Mobile _____

School Governor Performance Appraisal Questionnaire

Name _____

- Did you attend at least 75% of board meetings during the year? **Yes No**
- If you answered “No” are you able to devote sufficient time to your role in the coming year to ensure a minimum 75% attendance? **Yes No**
- How would you rate your performance during the year on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent in relation to:

• Acting collaboratively with other school governors in a spirit of mutual respect and teamwork.	1 2 3 4 5
• Being supportive to the Principal and his/her senior team by sharing knowledge, experience and networks.	1 2 3 4 5
• Contributing to discussion and providing challenge to the Principal and senior management.	1 2 3 4 5
• Thinking and acting independently, ensuring that proper critical review is given to the board’s decisions and actions.	1 2 3 4 5
Total Score	

- If you scored less than 12 can you give a commitment in the coming year to address those areas requiring improvement? **Yes No**
- Have you undertaken any training during the year with regard your school governor role? **Yes No**

- If you answered “Yes” please state what training you have undertaken.

--

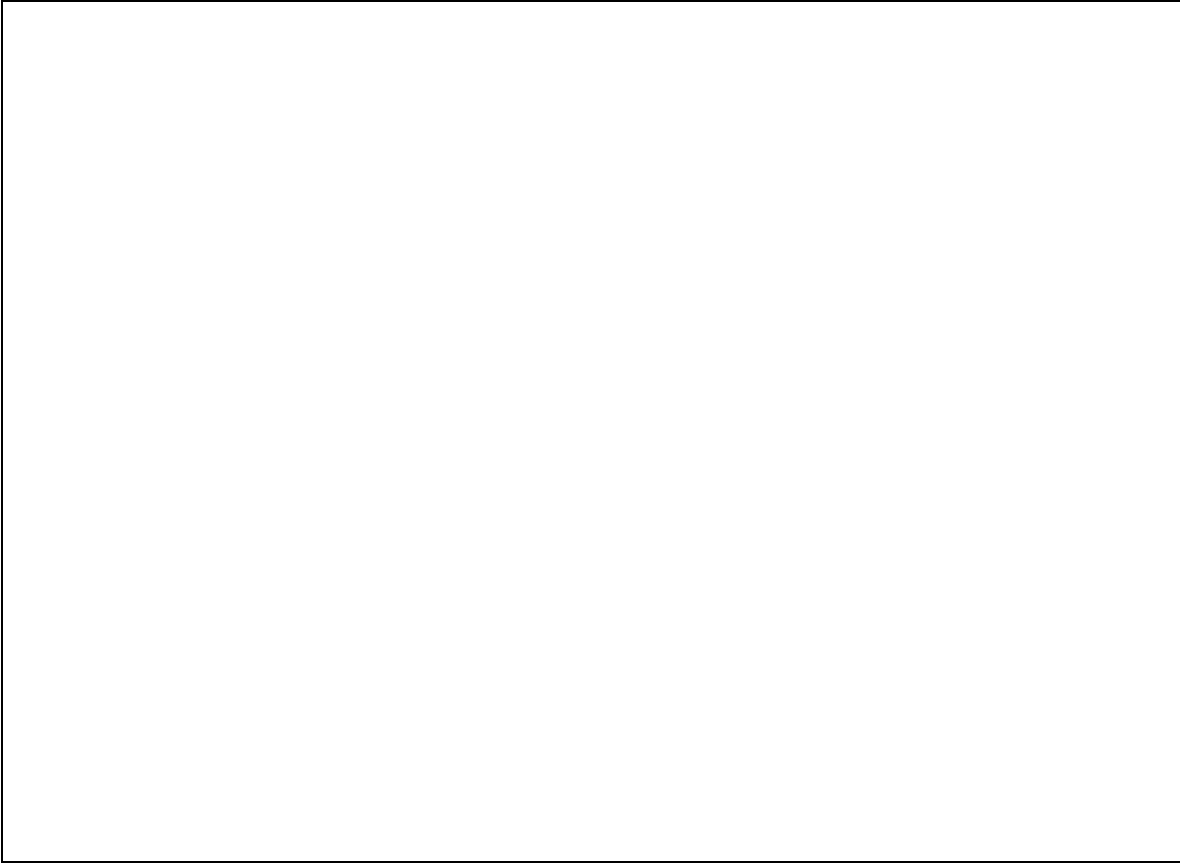
- If you answered “No” can you give a commitment to undertake training in relation to your school governor role in the coming year? **Yes No**

- In what areas do you feel it would be beneficial to receive training in the coming year?

--

- Are there any other general comments you would like to make? (Please continue on a separate sheet if required.)

--



Signed _____

Date _____

Board of Governors Performance Evaluation Questionnaire

Best practice in corporate governance recommends that a Board undertakes a formal annual evaluation of its performance and the performance of individual directors. Such practice can also enhance the performance of School Boards of Governors and sits well with the policy of self-evaluation. This questionnaire seeks to facilitate the School Board of Governors' evaluation process.

The questionnaire covers the key areas of Strategic Leadership, Performance Monitoring, Stakeholder Relationships, Risk Management, Resource Planning and Board Practices. It also draws on the quality indicators for the self-evaluation of governance as issued by the Education and Training Inspectorate.

The questionnaire should be completed by individual Governors and the results analysed for discussion by the full Board. The discussion should focus on:

- The evidence of good performance for those areas where there is agreement that performance is of the required standard.
- Those areas where there is broad agreement that improvement in Board performance is required.
- Those areas where a significant minority of Governors believe improvement is required.

The discussion should conclude with the agreement of an Action Plan to address the areas of under-performance. Progress against the Action Plan should be reviewed after six months.

There follows a series of statements grouped under category headings. Please rank each of the statements where:

1. = *Strongly Disagree* 2. = *Disagree* 3. = *Agree* 4. = *Strongly Agree*

Where your choice is 1 or 2, you must explain your reasons in the box provided.

Strategic Leadership

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A clear Vision has been articulated for the school.	1 2 3 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Board of Governors has in place a distinctive strategy/development plan for the school that is central to the way in which the school is directed.	1 2 3 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The strategy/development plan is well aligned to the needs of the learners, including those facing barriers to learning such as attendance, behaviour, social deprivation or special educational needs – and provides the foundation for continual improvement in educational performance.	1 2 3 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Board of Governors devotes quality time to periodically reviewing the implementation of the strategy/development plan and keeps it up to date by taking account of emerging trends and other changes in the school.	1 2 3 4

If you have chosen 1 or 2 for any of the statements, please outline your reasons below.

Performance Monitoring

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BoG engages actively in the planning, monitoring and review of the development of the school curriculum to ensure that the learning programmes and extra-curricular activities meet the needs of the learners and wider community. 	1 2 3 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Principal and his/her senior management team regularly report to the BoG on Key Performance Indicators that flow directly from the development plan. 	1 2 3 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BoG ensures that the information provided by the school about the achievements of the learners is robust, accurate and includes relevant benchmarked data where this is available. 	1 2 3 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BoG ensures that the school's targets are both achievable and sufficiently challenging to lead to and sustain improvement in the standards achieved by learners. 	1 2 3 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BoG monitors the progress made by learners with special educational needs. 	1 2 3 4

If you have chosen 1 or 2 for any of the statements, please outline your reasons below.

Stakeholder Relationships

<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Board of Governors receives reports on the views of staff, learners, parents and members of the community to assist in planning and evaluating the school's success.	1 2 3 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Regular meetings are held with funders and the feedback is that they are satisfied with the frequency and quality of communication with them.	1 2 3 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">There is reliable evidence that the school is considered by stakeholders to be performing well, with a strong board of governors, competent leadership team and good reputation.	1 2 3 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The work of the governing body is open and transparent, including providing information about how to raise a concern.	1 2 3 4

If you have chosen 1 or 2 for any of the statements, please outline your reasons below.

Risk Management

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BoG devotes quality time to identifying and reviewing the school's principal risks and ensures the risks are addressed and managed effectively. Such risks may include impact of DENI policies and changes, competition from other schools, decline in enrolment, financial sustainability, poor academic performance, not keeping pace with (immersion) educational best practice. 	1 2 3 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BoG is satisfied that sound health and safety, employment and safeguarding of children practices are implemented in order to protect the school against unnecessary litigation and reputational risk. 	1 2 3 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The BoG has established and regularly reviews thresholds of delegated authority between the Board and the Principal and understands the distinction between Board governance and the executive management role of the Principal and his/her management team. 	1 2 3 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial control procedures are in place and reviewed regularly by the BoG to ensure the security of all financial and other assets. 	1 2 3 4

If you have chosen 1 or 2 for any of the statements, please outline your reasons below.

Resource Planning

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reliable projections of future cash flows, for the medium as well as short term, are provided to the BoG and the Board is confident that the necessary finance is in place to enable the school to develop as planned.	1 2 3 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The BoG oversees the budget effectively to provide appropriate learning resources and accommodation to meet the needs of all the learners and the statutory curriculum.	1 2 3 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The BoG ensures the financial and human resources are deployed equitably and in the interests of all the learners.	1 2 3 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Board is satisfied that there is no evidence of less than fully transparent accounting in the financial statements.	1 2 3 4

If you have chosen 1 or 2 for any of the statements, please outline your reasons below.

Board Practices

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The BoG is cohesive with Governors being both supportive of the Principal and his/her senior management team and providing challenge to them in order to help them improve the school's effectiveness.	1 2 3 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Board meetings are well led and carefully structured with the right balance struck between strategic and operational issues and with a full, open discussion before major decisions are taken.	1 2 3 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Board papers are sent out in good time and are well prepared with a full analysis of the relevant issues, including consideration of options and presentation of reliable financial data.	1 2 3 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Board receives regular reports from sub-committees to provide assurance that they are exercising their roles effectively.	1 2 3 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effective induction and development programmes are in place, which ensure that Governors have a high level of relevant up to date information on the school, the external environment and regulatory requirements throughout their time on the board.	1 2 3 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The annual board evaluation is thorough and forward looking with action plans subsequently implemented which focus on addressing any areas where improvements are needed.	1 2 3 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working as a team, the board has the right blend of skills and experience and the appropriate degree of diversity, to enable it to face today's and tomorrow's challenges successfully.	1 2 3 4

If you have chosen 1 or 2 for any of the statements, please outline your reasons below.

Other Comments

Please add any other comments or observations which you would like to make. You may also like to reference your comments to a particular section heading in the questionnaire.

Signed_____

Date_____

Register of Gifts and Hospitality **Name**_____

All gifts or hospitality received as a result of your membership of the Board of Governors with a value in excess of £30 should be recorded. If no such gifts or hospitality were received, please write Nil or None.

Date	From	Description/Details	Estimated Value

Signed_____

Date_____

**Compliance Schedule
School Management Policies – Statutory**

Policy	Policy Owner	Date Approved	Review Date	Status		Evidence of Implementation
				Under Review	Active In Draft	
Curriculum						
Education of Children with Special Educational Needs						
Discipline and Prevention of Bullying						
Child Protection						
Drugs						
Open Enrolment						
Class sizes in practical subjects (Post primary schools only)						
Balloting of Parents and Teachers for appointment to Board of Governors						
Information to be included in school's prospectus and Annual Report						Written policy not required. Confirmation of adherence to statutory requirement only.
Descriptions of cases in which it is proposed to make charges for any optional extras e.g. school trips.						
Employment/Misconduct of Teachers						Written policy not required. Confirmation of adherence to statutory requirements as laid out in Teachers' (Eligibility) Regulations (NI) 1997 No 312

Compliance Schedule

School Management Policies – Non Statutory

Policy	Policy Owner	Date Approved	Review Date	Status	Active	Evidence of Implementation
Pastoral Care Policy				Under Review		<i>The Board of Governors has a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at all times. It is not a statutory requirement to have a written policy in this regard. Many of the other school policies will be in pursuit of meeting this responsibility.</i>
Irish Language Policy						
Promotion of Literacy and Numeracy						
Relationships and Sexuality Education						
Exceptional Closure Days						
Security and Personal Safety						
Fire Safety Policy						<i>Bi annual fire drills.</i>
Complaints Policy						
Assault on Teachers						
Management of Critical Incident						

**Compliance Schedule
HR/Employment Policies**

(s) = Minimum Statutory Requirements

Policy	Policy Owner	Date Approved	Review Date	Status	Active	Evidence of Implementation (Example)
Staff Salary Policy (S)				Under Review		
Staff Disciplinary Policy / Procedure (S)				In Draft		
Staff Grievance Policy / Procedure (S)						
Staff Expenses Policy						Included in staff induction. Authorisation of expenses.
Staff Leave Policy (S) including Annual, Compassionate, Dental and Medical appointments						Staff contracts.
Staff Sickness Absence (S)						
Staff Training and Development (S)						Included in staff induction. Annual training plan in place.
Termination of employment of teachers on grounds of ill health or capability (S)						
Teacher Redundancy Procedure (S)						
Personal Appearance at Work						Included in staff induction.
Managing Staff Attendance						
Health and Safety policy (S)						
Alcohol and Drugs						Included in staff induction.

Policy			Policy Owner	Date Approved	Review Date	Status	Active	Evidence of Implementation (Example)			
Smoking (S)								Included in staff induction.			
Maternity Leave (S)											
Paternity Leave (S)											
Adoption Leave (S)											
Parental Leave (S)											
Flexible Working (S)											
Job Share											
Working Time Directive (S)								Unlikely to be applicable in a school setting			
Equal Opportunities (S)											
Performance Review and Staff Development											
Procedure for dealing with principals and teachers whose work is unsatisfactory											
Harassment and Bullying (S)											
Promoting a dignified workplace											
Whistle blowing (S)											
Anti Bribery (S)								If following an assessment it is viewed that there is no risk of someone performing services for the school might carry out acts of bribery, a policy is not required			
Anti Fraud											

Policy				Policy Owner	Date Approved	Review Date	Status	Active	Evidence of Implementation (Example)			
Conflicts of Interest									Register of interests in place for Governors and management.			
Gifts and Hospitality									Register of Gifts and Hospitality in place for Governors and management.			
Internet and Email Usage									Included in staff induction.			
Social Media Policy									Included in staff induction.			
Data Protection (S)									Included in staff induction.			
Extended Use of Computer VDUs and eligibility for eye tests (S)												

Useful Reference Material

- Guide for Governors Department of Education www.deni.gov.uk
- School Governors Handbook Safeguarding and Child Protection
http://www.deni.gov.uk/cpsss_board_of_governors_handbook_revised_2012.pdf
- Together towards Improvement: A Process for Self Evaluation - Education and Training Inspectorate www.etini.gov.uk
- Comhairle Na Gaelscolaíochta www.comhairle.org
- Review of Irish medium Education - http://www.deni.gov.uk/85-schools/10-types_of_school-nischools_pg/schools_-_types_of_school-irish-medium_schools_pg/16_schools-types_of_schools-reviewofime_pg.htm
- Gaelscoileanna – www.gaelscoileanna.ie